



**To:** Nick Licata, Chair, Seattle City Council Housing, Human Services, Health and Culture Committee  
Sally Bagshaw, Councilmember  
Bruce Harrell, Councilmember  
Tom Rasmussen, Councilmember

**From:** Randy Engstrom, Director, Office of Arts & Culture

**Date:** November 26, 2013

**Subject:** Statement of Legislative Intent 3-1-A-2  
Recommendations concerning the long-term operations of the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute

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The 2013 Adopted Budget transferred the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute (LHPAI) from the Department of Parks and Recreation to the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs (OACA). The City Council also adopted a statement of legislative intent (SLI) tasking OACA to develop a long term, self-sustaining strategy for LHPAI over the next two years. The SLI requested that the plan be provided to the Council in two parts – an interim report in 2013 with the final plan presented to Council by June 1, 2014. This memo constitutes the interim report.

The SLI requested that OACA, working with the Seattle Arts Commission, develop and implement a plan concerning the long-term operations of LHPAI. The Council requested that the plan focus on maintaining LHPAI's standing programming for existing communities, while enhancing other programs and events, and also establishing a mechanism for long-term support and stability of the organization. In developing the plan, OACA was directed to consider, and then recommend, whether LHPAI should:

1. Continue to be operated by the City,
2. Be leased or transferred to a group or organization to carry forward LHPAI's programming, or
3. Be managed by a third-party organization for the City

**Background:** In January of 2013, OACA and LHPAI staff convened an Action Committee with 17 members. This committee met six times between February and July. Members included both current and former Seattle Arts Commissioners, LHPAI stakeholders, arts leaders, community members, City of Seattle department directors, representatives from City Council and the office of Mayor McGinn, and the City Budget Office. Committee members' names and affiliations are listed in Attachment 1.

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In addition to representation on the Action Committee (including the co-chair role), OACA updated the Seattle Arts Commission monthly on the progress of the committee. The Arts Commission formally endorsed the Action Committee's recommendations in October 2013.

Prior to the current effort, there were three previous planning efforts related to LHPAI: the 2008 Citizen Task Force Report, the 2010 Springboard Report, and the Parks Department 2012 SLI Response 81-1-A-1. Based on work from these prior efforts, the Action Committee used four parameters for guidance as they developed recommendations for a sustainable operations model. The parameters included:

1. Maintain the historic mission of LHPAI
2. Continue City ownership of the building
3. Maintain current budget levels through 2014
4. Implement a plan for reducing city support for LHPAI operations sometime after 2014

The Action Committee reviewed the recommendations and results of these previous planning efforts and studied what had been accomplished to date, what was in progress, and what needed to be done. The committee identified two primary objectives:

1. A non-profit entity is needed to support the mission and goals of the LHPAI
2. The City needs to determine its long-term role in operating a dedicated cultural facility

**Recommendations:** The Action Committee recommends the steps below to achieve the identified objectives. Their full recommendations, including an estimated timeline, are included as Attachment 2.

1. The LHPAI building should remain under City ownership
2. LHPAI should transition to an independent non-profit arts organization sometime in 2015
3. OACA should appoint a transition team leader for a term of up to 18 months. This person will lead the process to transition LHPAI to becoming an independent non-profit organization.

**Next Steps:** Moving forward, OACA, LHPAI and the Seattle Arts Commission will continue to work collaboratively on the implementation of the timeline. The 2014 Budget includes funding for a transition consultant who will work in a consulting capacity with LHPAI as they move through the recommendations. This consultant will be funded out of increased Admissions Tax revenue and will begin supporting the transition in early 2014. Together, OACA, LHPAI and

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Seattle Arts Commissioners will develop a transition team to provide support to the transition consultant.

OACA is committed to a collaborative process that ensures the collective success of everyone involved and that will achieve the desired outcome in a manner that is respectful, timely, strategic and in service to the Seattle community.

cc: Royal Alley Barnes, Director, Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute

Randy Engstrom, Director | Michael McGinn, Mayor

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